

VZCZCXRO8815
PP RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0015/01 0041239
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041239Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5715
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000015

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/04/2027
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [SU](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: GOS BOMBS VILLAGES AFTER AU OUTREACH TO REBEL
COMMANDERS

Classified By: CDA C. Hume, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: As an outgrowth of the December 15 Cease Fire Commission and with the support of UNMIS, the AU Force Commander traveled to Um Rai in North Darfur to meet with non-signatory rebel commanders on December 28. He reportedly obtained an agreement by the rebels to join the second chamber of the CFC but fears his efforts have been undone when the GOS bombed the site in the days after the meeting. The AU issued a statement denouncing the government's actions but other members of the CFC, to include the UN, have not. Washington may want to issue a belated condemnation of the actions by the GOS as an observer to the CFC. There appears to be renewed interest in a conference of non-signatories and we again hear rumors that the various factions of the SLA are conceptually close to an agreement, albeit geographically challenged. End Summary.

12. (C) Poloff met January 2 with UNMIS Field Coordinator for Darfur William Harrison and separately with UNMIS Acting OIC for the Darfur Regional Office (normally Head of Protection) Cate Steains to discuss the integration of the new UNMIS mission with the AU (septel). They also briefed him on the recent outreach to non-signatories that UNMIS is making in coordination with the AU and a recent meeting with non-signatory rebel commanders.

Joint Mission to Non-Signatories

13. (C) According to Steains, the outreach began at a special session of the Cease Fire Commission on December 15 in which the AU Force Commander and UNMIS pressed the participants to support the "second chamber" as a way for non-signatories to be brought into the cease fire process. Steains said she was impressed by MG Aprezi's performance in this meeting. She said he aggressively confronted the GOS over its recent activities and pressed the GOS rep over lack of support for the second chamber. Steains said that she believes Aprezi has been given a bad rap by the U.S. and others, and that while she did not want to fully defend his stewardship over the AU mission, in this recent Cease Fire Commission Meeting and the subsequent meeting with rebel commanders said he was quite effective. She said he is the only one in the AU who is actively trying to work these issues, and lamented the fact that the leadership in Khartoum and the political leadership in Darfur were not supportive of his efforts. For lack of AU support he has begun to increasingly partner with the UN. (Note: it does appear from the minutes that the December meeting of the Cease Fire Commission was a particularly good meeting, with thorough discussions of the

CFC and the second chamber as well as a good exchange on the current security situation, a far cry from some of the meetings where the key topic of discussion was the recovery of stolen Thuraya phones. Our CFC rep is stuck without a visa but an Embassy Darfur Liaison Officer will begin to attend in the breach).

¶4. (C) From this Cease Fire Commission meeting, UNMIS officers who know the rebel commanders were able to put together a meeting between them and the Force Commander. A joint UNMIS-AU team including Aprezi and General Santes were flown by UNMIS helicopter to Anka to meet with commanders of what Harrison described as the SLA/NSF (Non-Signatories Federation), the merger of the non-signatories from G-19, SLA/AW and SLA/AS. He said that while there appears to be splintering among the non-signatories, in fact when they are threatened they tend to coalesce and on the key issues of the peace process they are very close to agreement. Harrison described a blending of the non-signatories into the emerging Non-Signatories Federation, which has replaced the NRF as the umbrella for this grouping. He suggested that the most prominent military leader in the group is Adam Bakshef, Minni Minawi's former Chief of Staff, who commands some 600 fighters. Jar Al Nabi is second and has aspiration and support to become Secretary General, but is not well liked by Bakhet. A third leader is Sidiq Burra, whom Harrison describes as the strongest of the group militarily with 300-400 fighters, but who also does not get along with Bakhet. These field commanders, Harrison believes, could coalesce under the political leadership of Dr. Sharif Harir into a single movement under the right circumstances.

¶5. (C) Steains described a very good rapport between MG Aprezi and the commanders and believes he now has the commitment to join the second chamber of the Cease Fire

KHARTOUM 00000015 002 OF 002

Commission if he can get the GOS to agree. Harrison also said that there is a great opportunity to bring the commanders together by reaching out to 20 of Adam Bakshef's leaders and providing them transportation from Jebel Marra to Anka to meet with the other leaders of the group. If this group agrees to unite with the NSF it would complete the picture, and also shore up Sidiq Burra's group, which he said is in the tent but wavering because it sees Bakshef's group remaining outside.

GOS Attack Unravels Progress

¶6. (C) Meanwhile, since no good conference goes unpunished in this environment, the GOS, after being briefed on the effort by the AU, bombed the Anka and Um Rai sites over the next few days. Steains said she was pleased to see that Aprezi spoke out about the bombing, and was somewhat embarrassed that the UN did not do likewise. Aprezi told the press he fears "it looks like I led them to the area to get bombed." He added "when a bombing is made after I have visited an area, I don't have any credibility any more," and said he believes he has now lost influence with this key group.

¶7. (C) Comment: Ground truth is often hard to come by here, and this message is but one view from a few well placed players that may help to shed some light on recent events here. It does appear that there are still some worthy initiatives in the realm of non-signatory commander's conferences and the Cease Fire Commission is something that we will keep close tabs on and participate in to see where there are other opportunities to further the peace process. As an observer to the CFC we should also probably add our voice when there is a blatant violation of the cease fire, especially one intended so directly to undercut the AU in its mandate here. A belated condemnation of this most recent government bombing would not be out of order.

HUME